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ABSTRACT

The Indiana State Advisory Council on Vocational Education (SACVE) endorses opportunities for all Indiana citizens to attain an education that is relevant, understandable, and reasonable. It recommends that secondary and postsecondary resources be combined and committed to mount a coordinated, unified campaign to provide the general public with accurate information concerning vocational/technical education. The state legislature should provide incentives to encourage collaboration rather than maintain funding systems that tend to be divisive. SACVE further recommends that joint regional planning for vocational education currently encouraged by State Board of Vocational and Technical Education grants be established for the entire state. It is recommended that training resources be made avaiiable for regional planners to develop the skills necessary to apply the Indiana collaboration model. SACVE recommends that Indiana undertake an educators-in-industry summer program for counselors and educational administrators. A vocational representative should be included as a resource member of each superintendent's cabinet or top administrative team to complement the expertise already represented in those bodies. SACVE recommends substantially increased state-level financial support for all levels of vocational/technical education. (YLB)

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Relevance
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— A CHANCE FOR EVERYBODY!

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INDIANA STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

July 1984

CE039171

A position paper of the Indiana State Advisory Council on Vocational Education

This paper was developed under the direction of the Indiana State Advisory Council on Vocational Education's (SACVE) Policy and Planning Committee, Cynthia Barker, Chair. It was adopted by the membership as a SACVE position paper on July 19, 1984. The SACVE issues this paper as a part of the Council's on-going effort to strive toward excellence in Indiana's vocational education programs.

Summary:

The seven specific recommendations presented in this paper are

- It is recommended that secondary and postsecondary resources be combined and committed to mount a coordinated, unified campaign to provide the general public with accurate information concerning vocational/technical education. (page 3)
- The state legislature should provide incentives to encourage collaboration rather than maintain funding systems which tend to be divisive. (page 5)
- SACVE further recommends that joint regional planning for vocational education currently encouraged by SBVTE grants be established for the entire state. (page 5)
- We recommend that training resources be made available for regional planners to develop the skills necessary to apply the Indiana collaboration model. (page 5)
- SACVE recommends Indiana undertake an educators in industry summer program for counselors and, where appropriate, educational administrators. (page 5)
- SACVE respectfully recommends that a vocational representative be included as a resource member of each superintendent's cabinet—or top administrative team—to complement the considerable expertise already represented in those bodies. (page 5)
- SACVE recommends substantially increased state-level financial support for all levels of vocational/technical education. (page 6)

RELEVANCE, UNDERSTANDING, REASON
— A CHANCE FOR EVERYBODY!

Preface:

We should see that all our young get a good grounding in English and literature, history, math, science, and other basics... We must also recognize that our vocational classrooms are just as important as any other.

Ronald Reagan
June 29, 1983

RELEVANCE, UNDERSTANDING, REASON

The mid-1980s, as was true during the late 1950's, is a time of national concern for the quality and effectiveness of American education, particularly secondary education. The call for reform of our educational structures once again is being shouted across the land. Once more reformers propose that more homework, more math, more English, and longer school days will result in more academic excellence. The State Advisory Council on Vocational Education (SACVE) fears that such "reform" tactics also may accelerate the 5.5 percent increase in the dropout rate that occurred nationally between 1972-1982. (1)

A school's job is to move each youngster ahead in his or her learning, not to set up some arbitrary standard that all must meet and then fail those who don't... "If a kid can't clear four feet, it doesn't do much good to raise the bar to four feet, six inches. It does help to give more and better coaching, more and better training." (1)

To this observation the Council adds, the high jump possibly may not be an appropriate event for all young people -- perhaps the "failing" high jumper has the potential to be an outstanding shot putter! Therefore, an integral part of "better coaching and better training" will be the identification and provision of events appropriate for a wide range of talents.

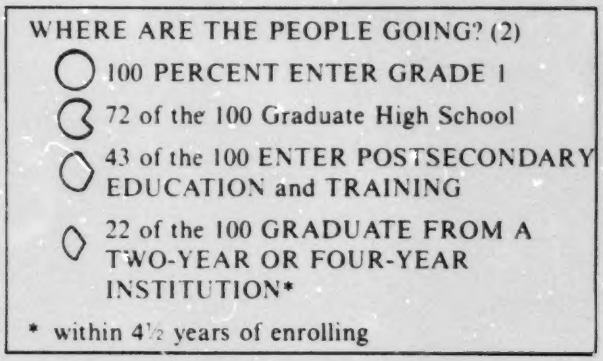
State of Educational Delivery Systems:

Our current educational system wastes human resources by not *fully* developing all of the youth that Indiana must have to survive economically. The state must strive for the optimum development for all of its citizens. This point is key for the state's survival in its current economic development thrust. Yet, each year an important element of the state's infrastructure for economic development diminishes. The state's annual net out-migration has been running at a number approximately equal to the size of the City of Richmond. The Council observes that the state's college and talented vocational graduates account for a disproportionately large percent of that exodus. Indiana's economic development infrastructure thus is being eroded through out-migration as well as through the loss of human resources represented by secondary and post-secondary dropouts.

Secondary education actually is the last formal education for approximately 60% of our youth before they enter adult society. Yet the current trend for secondary education sometimes appears to turn our high schools from comprehensive institutions to something resembling academic prep schools. We observe, however, that only teaching and nursing, only two of the ten occupations projected to increase at the greatest rate during the next decade, require postsecondary training.(3) If public schools adopt the narrow mission of college preparation, students may be denied the opportunities

Indiana Department of Public Instruction data indicate that the state's retention rate is even lower than the national statistics presented in Table I.

TABLE I


WHERE ARE THE PEOPLE GOING? (2)
100 PERCENT ENTER GRADE 1
72 of the 100 Graduate High School
43 of the 100 ENTER POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION and TRAINING
22 of the 100 GRADUATE FROM A TWO-YEAR OR FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION*
* within 4½ years of enrolling

required for determining and developing their own occupational choices. Employers, in turn, may assume the power to determine who will and will not have opportunities to learn a skill. By learning job skills only on the job, a substantial number of our youth will diminish their opportunities. Students should have the chance to explore *their choices*, to develop *their skills and talents*, and to then take them to the market place to competitively seek and secure the opportunities that are *best for them*. For the approximately 80 percent (4) of our youth who are unable, cannot afford, or are uninterested in completing a four-year college program, a major opportunity to explore and develop their uniquenesses is effectively withdrawn.

We must, of course, continue to serve the important group who wish to earn undergraduate degrees. This minority, however, should not be served at the expense of the majority of our secondary youth, most of whom will benefit from the opportunities vocational education provides them. The Council believes education must be responsive to all students' needs and must provide individually appropriate programs. To do less serves to alienate still more of our youth and contributes to social concerns represented by the large group of unprepared young adult dropouts.

Resources:

A major resource for creating more effective education largely has been overlooked as commissions and panels examined the so-called deplorable conditions of American education and framed recommendations for improvements. Examinations of and the solutions for "crises in education" concentrate on traditional liberal arts disciplines within general education to the exclusion of the "slumbering giant" that SACVE believes has the greatest potential for general education improvement—vocational education. Placement of students into gainful employment remains a sought-for outcome of all vocational programs. There are, however, intrinsic values for students participating in secondary vocational programs which contribute to the achievement of widely-accepted goals for general education and which promote human development. For example, participation in vocational programs can help students develop a sense of personal competence and accomplishment which contributes to the development of positive self concepts essential for contributing to society. Vocational programs provide an additional avenue for students to develop aesthetic as well as practical self expression. Silberman builds a persuasive case for vocational programs aiding individuals in the development of personal integrity, a spirit of cooperativeness, and a heightened sense of altruism. (5)

> *"Liberal education" and "vocational training" should be conceived of neither as hostile rivals nor as mutually exclusive enterprises but... as two essential aspects of the total preparation of the individual for his total life...* (6)

During the 1970's the career education movement sought to build bridges between liberal and vocational education. Both, however, are actually facets of general education. "The qualities or characteristics that have to do with 'vocationalness' or 'generalness' simply do not depend upon the name of the subject. It is the *intent of the individual* that makes a subject become vocational or general - *not the name of the subject*." (6)

Perceived Barriers:

Indiana's secondary vocational education enrollments remain relatively stable when viewed against the declining total secondary enrollments. The Council is convinced that vocational education should be viewed as a major resource in the education reform movement. However, enrollment in vocational education has failed to reflect that position. Therefore, SACVE initiated a modest study during the Spring of 1984 to identify perceived barriers restricting secondary enrollment in vocational programs. As a first exploratory step, thirteen people representing a variety of positions such as Department of Public Instruction, secondary principals, secondary counselors, and area vocational directors were asked to identify barriers to students enrolling in secondary vocational programs. From the responses to this initial request, thirty-six possible barriers were identified. These listed barriers were assembled into a questionnaire distributed to the original thirteen people plus the SACVE membership. Twenty-three responses were received, and fifteen perceived barriers indicated by more than half of the respondents were identified for further consideration. These fifteen perceived barriers are presented in descending frequency of selection as Table II below.

TABLE II
BARRIERS TO SECONDARY STUDENTS ENROLLING IN VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Perceived Barriers

1. The public is ignorant concerning vocational education and what it is about.
2. Vocational programs are perceived as designed for the low or poor achievers.
3. Parents, teachers, and counselors are degree oriented and tend to discourage students with academic potential from vocational programs.
4. Students and parents believe that if students elect a vocational program, they can never attend college.
5. Some vocational programs suffer from a poor image in the comprehensive high school setting.
6. Counselors and students are not familiar with nor aware of vocational programs offered.
7. Public relations efforts are not directed to selling vocational education.
8. New graduation requirements create both real and perceived barriers.
9. Travel time for students to go to vocational programs limits attendance.
10. Additional costs of vocational education and inadequate reimbursement for costs of vocational education restrict enrollments.
11. Declining local school enrollments create a reaction by home-school staff to keep students at home school.
12. Sending schools establish limits on the number of students to be sent to area school without considering students' interests.
13. Students hesitate to sign up for vocational programs because friends are staying at home school.
14. Students fear trying something new and of leaving home school deters participation in an area vocational program.
15. National and state priority for vocational education has diminished in educational discussion and direction setting.

All of the perceived barriers noted generally are acknowledged in publications and are referenced frequently in discussions among vocational educators. No barriers unique to sex, handicapping conditions, nor minority group membership were identified. None of the perceived barriers is insurmountable but all will require attention. We believe some can be overcome through sustained long-term and effective informational campaigns and increased training opportunities. Others may require a restructuring of some aspects of vocational education and, perhaps, of general education, including the fiscal structures for both. The perceived barriers to secondary students enrolling in vocational programs largely can be classified as "image" or "substantive." The "image" barriers should yield to a long-term, effective informational campaign. The image barriers at the secondary level also affect postsecondary vocational programs since secondary programs frequently serve as a feeder system for postsecondary programs.

Therefore, **it is recommended that secondary and postsecondary resources be combined and committed to mount a coordinated, unified campaign designed to provide the general public with accurate information concerning vocational/technical education.**

Collaboration:

One thing that is needed to improve the overall quality of education is greater cooperation, concern, and sensitivity from both the general and vocational groups. Few people in the general education area pay much attention to vocational education, and few people in vocational education pay much attention to general education. The availability of one group to the other is very important. (6)

To date, we have not even scratched the surface of the opportunity that vocational education offers for students to achieve the general goals of education. Great imagination and commitment among institutions, administrators, and instructors are necessary to promote these goals. (6)

Indiana has the "know-how" available to facilitate the development of such collaborative relationships by applying the Indiana Collaboration Model in order to accomplish the general goals of education. A number of perceived barriers can be impacted by the application of that model. Building true collaborative relationships, however, requires training of potential collaborators in collaborative skills and time to build healthy relationships.(7) The Indiana Model identifies three key outcomes for successful collaboration including (1) expanded knowledge and understanding of themselves and the others participating in the effort and (2) an identification of needed support services. The most pertinent outcome of collaboration relative to this discussion (3)

. . . is that collaboration expands the service potential for all partners. Through improved understanding, elimination of non-productive duplication, and improved utilization of each partner's communication or service network, accomplishments well beyond the sum of what was possible for the individual partners have been attained. The synergism of collaboration not only enhances the payback of initial investment, but also is important in getting the most for the money . . . (7)

It is suggested that the state legislature make available resources for five percent of the state's school districts during a first year and that those districts be provided the required training and support services to develop collaborative relationships. Eligible school districts will be those willing to devote the time and energy needed to develop collaborative planning involving their counselors and administrators as well as math, electronics, science, auto mechanics, English, business, and other teachers. These school corporations then may serve as lead districts in the application of the Indiana Collaboration Model in the school setting. They can provide trainers for other Indiana school corporations also willing to improve their programs through collaborative planning. The Council commends the SBVTE's efforts to support the "Partners in Education" project and urges local schools to expand local business education collaboration. *A real bonus of the collaborative planning process is a broadened base of ownership for both vocational and liberal arts components of general education within school corporations and, ultimately, in the state.*

Development of collaborative relationships between the liberal arts and the vocational facets of general education at the secondary level is important. There is, however, another equally important collaboration that must be developed. Vocational education at the secondary level should not be considered an end in itself. As never before, people must be committed to learning as a continual life-long process. Demands have increased to obtain jobs. To retain and progress in a job often requires further educational efforts. Therefore, the secondary and postsecondary aspects of vocational education must work together as a single ongoing strand of public education in the state.

An important step in the correct direction has been encouraged through the State Board of Vocational and Technical Education's (SBVTE) regional planning grants of recent years. SACVE supported the concept of regional planning and the sharing of resources for secondary and postsecondary vocational programs for many years. Close communication and coordinated activities involving the secondary and postsecondary levels, *while each maintains autonomy*, are essential for developing the maximum potential of our vocational system. This type of collaborative approach should provide for student matriculation between vocational education institutions with a minimum amount of duplication and repetition of course content. Institutions will be provided with the flexibility required to meet the state's needs for the well-developed human resources essential for its economic growth.

Students should be able to receive credit for learning accomplished as they move from one institution to another and should not have to repeat course content. It should be possible for a secondary student to enroll in and receive credit for training offered at a postsecondary institution. In several areas of high technology, a two-plus-two concept should be developed, supported, and undertaken. Such an approach combines the last two years of high school with the first two years of postsecondary education to prepare skilled technicians. This method also should establish an access avenue for life-long continual upgrading of jobs skills.

There are "pockets of progress" in the state where collaboration, communication, and sharing are currently practiced. However, it is SACVE's position that such practices should be the mode rather than the exception.

The State Legislature should provide incentives to encourage collaboration rather than maintain funding systems which tend to be divisive. SACVE further recommends that joint regional planning for vocational education currently encouraged by SBVTE grants be established for the entire state. Furthermore, we recommend that training resources be made available for regional planners to develop the skills necessary to apply the Indiana collaboration model.

Counselors and Administrators:

Counselors have a greater responsibility than is currently being fulfilled in most high schools as reflected in the perceived barriers. Counselors have a tremendous opportunity to aid *all* students, college and non-college bound. Based on interviews with 150 Hoosier counselors, however, many counselors understand neither what the community needs and expects from its school system nor the contributions local vocational programs can make in meeting those community expectations.(8) There frequently is a lack of community support for local education. One reason for such lack of support is that the school's products who do not leave the community for postsecondary education include the dropouts and general education graduates. If business is to employ them, they must be further developed and trained for *any* job. These employer contacts with the inadequately prepared products of our schools create a lack of confidence in the overall process. Such situations *could be* greatly reduced if counselors were fully informed of the range of available options such as vocational programs and the considerable benefits to students of such programs. If counselors are provided the information to become better informed concerning total community needs and expectations, they can assist students in identifying various alternatives open to them, including vocational education.

From 1980 to 1982 the SBVTE sponsored and funded an outstanding summer program for counselors which placed them in private sector employment and through weekly seminars addressed community expectations and awareness of alternatives.(9) The Council believes a similar, but expanded, program is needed. Therefore, **SACVE recommends Indiana undertake an educators in industry summer program for counselors and, where appropriate, educational administrators.**

A number of counselors and administrators tend to be from non-vocational backgrounds and may not be fully aware of the opportunities vocational and technical programs can provide to *all* students. Some may view vocational education as out of vogue. Most vocational programs are relevant and are constantly updated to be current with Indiana's business and industry. So that Indiana's educational administrators may expand their awareness of the ways in which vocational and technical programs can contribute to accomplishing general education's overall mission, it is desirable that vocational educators be included as an integral part of each top administrative team.

SACVE respectfully recommends that a vocational representative be included as a resource member of each Superintendent's Cabinet—or top administrative team—to complement the considerable expertise already represented in those bodies.

Funding and Accountability:

Funding barriers must be addressed by the Indiana legislature. The Governor's 1981 Assessment of Vocational-Technical Education in Indiana included strong recommendations to change the funding structures and to provide increased state financial support for vocational technical education.

SACVE recommends substantially increased state-level financial support for all levels of vocational/technical education.

Vocational technical education has more accountability built into it to assist legislators in their decision-making process than other aspects of general education. Vocational technical programs are the most accountable for their products. Local employers are involved in the planning, delivery, and evaluation of programs through a well-developed, long-established advisory committee structure. Vocational technical programs in this state are implemented, or continued, only with *demonstrated and documented evidence* of need. The quality of *all* of the state's vocational/technical programs is regularly assessed through follow-up studies of graduates including the extent to which graduates are placed into *positions related to their education* and through an eight-year-old SBVTE effort whereby program quality is regularly and systematically reviewed by each secondary and postsecondary institution as well as by a visiting team of peers.

SACVE challenges all aspects of general education to adopt similar vehicles for accountability. If this challenge is accepted by the other components of general education, we believe that more positive educational change will occur in a shorter time and that more vocational programs will be added to our educational system than anyone currently would dream possible. The functional level of knowledge and skills attained by our secondary graduates will rise with a concurrent move toward zero failure—zero dropouts—for Indiana's high school youth. SACVE does commend the Indiana Department of Education for the steps taken toward accountability as represented by the elementary and secondary testing programs currently being developed.

Conclusion:

The Council is convinced that Hoosiers want vocational education to be a prominent consideration in the state's education discussions and direction setting. The Indiana Advisory Council on Vocational Education believes the role of vocational education in the high school curriculum is essential. Vocational education is a motivating educational tool. It helps prepare students for employment in an occupation and prepares them for participation in postsecondary education. The current industrial revolution, neatly packaged as "high tech," is a vocational education challenge, opportunity, and requirement because *vocational education plays an important role within Indiana's infrastructure for economic development. All* of the SACVE's recommendations presented in this document, moreover, are consistent with and complementary to the "State of Indiana Policy for Vocational Education, Training, and Employment" issued by Governor Robert D. Orr on September 30, 1982. This policy, in part, promises that

INDIANA WILL

- *place as strong an emphasis on human resources development as it places on other components of economic development.*
- *assure that vocational education, training, and employment services are accessible to all citizens who can benefit from such services.*
- *support the maintenance and expansion of vocational education, training, and employment services.*
- *continue to support cooperation among all deliverers of vocational education, training, and employment services.*

SACVE strongly endorses these four premises and urges action to assure implementation. Let every parent, taxpayer, educator, legislator, and labor, business and community leader take heed. We must ensure opportunities for *all* Indiana citizens, especially for our state's bridge to the future—youth, to attain the basic vocational/technical skills required both for a high quality of life for them and for economic survival of the state. These same vocational/technical skills also will provide citizens an education that is **relevant, understandable,** and **reasonable.** SACVE requests your support and assistance in providing *a chance for everybody.*

Summary:

In summary, the seven specific recommendations presented in this paper are

- It is recommended that secondary and postsecondary resources be combined and committed to mount a coordinated, unified campaign to provide the general public with accurate information concerning vocational/technical education. (page 3)
- The state legislature should provide incentives to encourage collaboration rather than maintain funding systems which tend to be divisive. (page 5)
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